

UNITED STATES CONCERN OVER THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF SOVIET PERSONNEL IN CUBA: Reply Made by the President (Kennedy) to a Question Asked Following an Address Before the Economic Club, New York City, December 14, 1962

Mr. Khrushchev in his agreement "only committed himself to the withdrawal of the missiles and the bombers and the manpower which was connected with the maintenance of those forces. That would amount to several thousand. In addition, he stated that he would, though he did not put a time limit on this, he would be withdrawing other elements. But that guarantee is not as precise and that commitment has not been implemented, nor was it as hard as his others, which he has kept. So this [the continued presence of Russian manpower in Cuba] must be a matter of continuing concern, and is the reason why we are maintaining observation and verification by our own means daily, and why we will continue to do so. And while the matter of Cuba, therefore, still remains unsettled, as long as it's a Soviet military base, it of course represents a threat to peace in the Caribbean. On the other hand, it does not represent an offensive threat under present conditions, nor will it be, of course, permitted to do so.